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Sen. Laura Toy announces that Senate acts to protect Michigan's water resources

LANSING – The Senate unanimously approved legislation Thursday to provide comprehensive regulations for water use in Michigan, announced state Sen. Laura M. Toy, R-Livonia.

Senate Bills 850-852, 854 and 857 create new standards for water withdrawals and permit programs for water users to help them avoid adverse impacts on the environment. These new regulations would help prevent a water crisis in the future and help preserve the Great Lakes for future generations.

“Michigan’s waterways are an irreplaceable part of our state’s identity,” Sen. Toy said. “Today we have taken a large step forward in protecting them for our residents, tourists, industry and most importantly for our children.”

The package will:

- Put in place a system to manage significant new water withdrawals that have the potential to impact our water and water-dependent natural resources;
- Implement an interim standard that will provide protections for key designated trout streams by defining critical zones around the streams;
- Develop an easy-to-use model to replace the interim standard that will allow a user to click on a map and determine if water use will cause an adverse impact;
- Implement a permitting program for the largest water users in the state; and
- Authorize the creation of groups of water users to work with the DEQ in crafting water plans that resolve water use problems before adverse impacts occur.

“Michigan’s water resources are essential to the future of this state,” said Senate Majority Leader Ken Sikkema, R-Wyoming. “That is why I have worked to safeguard this tremendous natural resource for many years in many different ways.”

The legislation now goes to the House of Representatives for consideration.

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